

5 Steps: When Your Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19

Guidance for New Hampshire Businesses

Key Steps for Investigating and Reporting COVID-19 Cases and Exposures

NH Department of Health and Human Services encourages use of the [NH Universal Best Practices](#). These are recommendations for all businesses to consider and implement in their daily operations. Nothing in this document or other guidance precludes any business from taking additional precautions for the health and safety of its employees and consumers. “Employee” includes “organizations” and “employee” includes “volunteers” in this document.

Employee health information shared with their employer should be kept private.

1 Identify and Exclude Employees Who Might Have COVID-19

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 and were at their place of employment during their infectious period (two days prior to symptom onset or test date if asymptomatic) should notify their employer.

Employers should have a designated person to whom employees report when they feel ill or have tested positive for COVID-19.

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home and [self-isolate](#). Employees should not return to work or other community settings until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met. See #4, below.

Employees of covered businesses or organizations should be reminded of the provision of the federal [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) that allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms.

2

Identify and Notify Close Contacts and Recommend Testing

Employers should have a plan in place that includes a protocol for quickly identifying workplace contacts of employees with COVID-19 who worked while infectious. To begin Contact Tracing speak with the employee diagnosed with COVID-19 and ask about:

- When they worked while infectious (while ill or in the two days before symptom onset/test date)
- If they participate in any work-related carpooling
- Who they interacted with during work activities and breaks

Notify any employees who were **within 6 feet for more than ten minutes** from two days before the employee with COVID-19 developed symptoms OR two days before their positive test if the employee with a positive COVID-19 test did not have symptoms.

It is in the best interest of employers that contact tracing be completed quickly to help prevent spread of the virus in the workplace.

Close contacts must [self-quarantine](#) for 10 days following their last exposure to the person with COVID-19 unless they are fully vaccinated (the exposure was more than two weeks after their final dose of vaccine).

All close contacts should get tested for COVID-19, even if they do not have any symptoms.

Close contacts should get tested 5 – 7 days after close contact to a person with COVID-19. This should be a test that detects active infection – preferably with a nose swab that is tested with a PCR-based test. Employees who are identified as close contacts cannot “test out” of quarantine.

3

Report and Seek Guidance

When you initially learn about a positive case associated with your establishment, it is important to notify the NH Department of Health and Human Services as soon as possible. Our team will work closely with you to learn more about the situation and to provide guidance on how to control the spread of COVID-19 disease.

To notify the NH Department of Health and Human Service call 603-271-6996. At minimum, please be prepared to provide:

- Positive employee(s) name
- Phone numbers
- Dates at the establishment
- Any suspected close contacts

4

Implement Return to Work Policy

Employees should not return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers.

Employees with COVID-19 can return to work when:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND
- At least 24 hours have passed since fever went away without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in other symptoms

If the employee did NOT have symptoms but has a positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, they can return to work:

- After 10 days have passed since the date of the positive COVID-19 diagnostic test.

Employees that were identified as close contacts should stay home and [self-quarantine](#).

As long as the employee doesn't develop symptoms of COVID-19 during quarantine, they can stop quarantine after 10 days following the date of the last close contact to a person with COVID-19.

5

Limit the Spread

Continue to use the resources available to you to prevent introduction or re-introduction of COVID-19 into your workplace.

[NH Universal Best Practices](#)

[Self-Isolation Guidance](#)

[Self-Quarantine Guidance](#)

[COVID-19 Testing Information](#)

[Vaccine information](#)

[Vaccine FAQ](#)

[Travel Guidance](#)

For more information or if you think your business or organization has a **potential outbreak (3 or more cases of COVID-19 around the same time)**, call the NH Department of Health and Human Services at 603-271-6996.